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Sustainable development: sustainable mountain development

Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bhutan, Burundi, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, France, Honduras, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Seychelles, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Viet Nam: revised draft resolution

Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed 2002 the International Year of Mountains, and, noting, in this regard, the Bishkek Mountain Platform, the outcome document of the Global Mountain Summit, held in Bishkek in 2002,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000, 57/245 of 20 December 2002, 58/216 of 23 December 2003, 59/238 of 22 December 2004, 60/198 of 22 December 2005, 62/196 of 19 December 2007 and 64/205 of 21 December 2009,

Reaffirming chapter 13 of Agenda 21[1] and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[2] in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ("Mountain Partnership"), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with benefits from the committed support of fifty countries, sixteen intergovernmental organizations and one hundred and thirteen

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] *Report of the Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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organizations from major groups, as an important multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting also the Global Change and the World's Mountains Conference, held in Perth, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in 2010, the Lucerne World Mountain Conference held in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 2011, and its regional assessment reports on progress in sustainable mountain development since 1992 and its Call for Action, and the International Conference on Green Economy and Sustainable Mountain Development, held in Kathmandu in 2011,

Acknowledging that despite the progress that has been made in promoting sustainable development of mountain regions, poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion and environmental degradation are still high,

Acknowledging also the importance of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world recognize the importance of the sustainable development of mountain regions for poverty eradication, and recognizes the global importance of mountains as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity and other natural resources, including timber and minerals, as providers of some sources of renewable energy, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage, all of which generate positive, unaccounted economic benefits;

3. *Recognizes* that mountains provide sensitive indications of climate change through phenomena such as modifications of biological diversity, the retreat of mountain glaciers and changes in seasonal runoff that are having an impact on major sources of freshwater in the world, and stresses the need to undertake actions to minimize the negative effects of these phenomena and promote adaptation measures;

4. *Also recognizes* that sustainable mountain development is a key component in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in many regions of the world;

5. *Encourages* greater consideration of sustainable mountain development issues in intergovernmental discussions on climate change, biodiversity loss and combating desertification in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[4] the Convention on Biological Diversity,[5] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa[6] and the United Nations Forum on Forests;

[3] A/66/294.
[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[5] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.
[6] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

6. *Notes with concern* that there remain key challenges to achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty in mountain regions and protecting mountain ecosystems, and that populations in mountain regions are frequently among the poorest in a given country;

7. *Encourages* Governments to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches in their sustainable development strategies, and to promote integrated approaches to policies related to sustainable development in mountain regions;

8. *Also encourages* Governments to integrate mountain sustainable development in national, regional and global policymaking and development strategies, including through incorporating mountain-specific requirements in sustainable development policies or through specific mountain policies;

9. *Notes* that the growing demand for natural resources, including water, the consequences of erosion, deforestation and watershed degradation, the frequency and scale of natural disasters, as well as increasing out-migration, the pressures of industry, transport, tourism, mining and agriculture and the consequences of climate change and loss of biodiversity are some of the key challenges in fragile mountain ecosystems to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountain regions, consistent with the Millennium Development Goals;

10. *Underlines* the importance of sustainable forest management, the avoidance of deforestation and the restoration of lost and degraded forest ecosystems of mountains in order to enhance the role of mountains as natural carbon and water regulators, and notes that International Mountain Day is devoted in 2011 to the theme "Mountains and forests", as a contribution to the observance of the International Year of Forests, 2011;

11. *Notes* that sustainable agriculture in mountain regions is important for the protection of the mountain environment and the promotion of the local economy, and appreciates the important role of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the United Nations system in promoting sustainable agricultural development and forestry and its beneficial impact on sustainable mountain development through its field programme, normative activities and support to international processes;

12. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact in recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in mountain regions, especially those in developing countries, and urges the international community to take concrete steps to support national and regional efforts to ensure the sustainable development of mountains, and, in this regard, notes with appreciation the Second World Landslide Forum, which was organized by the International Consortium on Landslides and hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in October 2011, and the course on disaster risk management in mountain areas of the International Programme on Research and Training on Sustainable Management of Mountain Areas, organized by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat and the University of Turin, Italy;

13. *Encourages* Governments, the international community and other relevant stakeholders to develop or improve disaster risk management strategies to cope with the increasing adverse impact of disasters in mountain regions, such as

flash floods, including glacial lake outburst floods, as well as landslides, debris flows and earthquakes;

14. *Calls upon* Governments, with the collaboration of the scientific community, mountain communities and intergovernmental organizations, where appropriate, to study, with a view to promoting sustainable mountain development, the specific concerns of mountain communities, including the adverse impact of climate change on mountain environments and biological diversity, in order to elaborate sustainable adaptation strategies and subsequently implement adequate measures to cope with the adverse effects of climate change;

15. *Underlines* the fact that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national development plans;

16. *Encourages* the further establishment of committees or similar multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements and mechanisms at the national and regional levels, where appropriate, to enhance intersectoral coordination and collaboration for sustainable development in mountain regions;

17. *Also encourages* the increased involvement of local authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders, in particular the rural population, indigenous peoples, civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes, land-use planning and land tenure arrangements, and activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

18. *Underlines* the need for improved access to resources, including land, for women in mountain regions, as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments, and encourages Governments and intergovernmental organizations to integrate the gender dimension, including gender-disaggregated data, in mountain development activities, programmes and projects;

19. *Stresses* that indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge, including in the field of medicine, are to be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy, programmes and planning in mountain regions, and underlines the importance of promoting the full participation and involvement of mountain communities in decisions that affect them and of integrating indigenous knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives;

20. *Recalls with appreciation* the adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of a programme of work on mountain biological diversity;[7]

21. *Invites* States and other stakeholders to strengthen implementation of the programme of work on mountain biological diversity, including through the establishment of appropriate multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements and an appropriate multi-stakeholder institutional mechanism;

[7] UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21/PART2, decision VII/27.

22. *Recognizes* that many developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, need to be assisted in the formulation and implementation of national strategies and programmes for sustainable mountain development, through bilateral, multilateral and South-South cooperation, as well as through other collaborative approaches;

23. *Emphasizes* the importance of exchange of best practices, information and appropriate environmentally sound technologies for sustainable mountain development, and encourages Member States and relevant organizations in this regard;

24. *Notes* that funding for sustainable mountain development has become increasingly important, especially in view of the greater recognition of the global importance of mountains and the high levels of extreme poverty, food insecurity and hardship that mountain communities face, and, in this respect, invites Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, all relevant United Nations conventions and their funding mechanisms, within their respective mandates, and all relevant stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to consider providing support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions, particularly in developing countries;

25. *Underlines* the need to explore a wide range of funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, increased opportunities for microfinance, including microcredit and microinsurance, small housing loans, savings, education and health accounts, and support for entrepreneurs seeking to develop small- and medium-sized businesses and, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, debt for sustainable development swaps;

26. *Encourages* the further development of sustainable agricultural value chains and the improvement of access to and participation in markets for mountain farmers and agro-industry enterprises, with a view to substantially increasing the income of farmers, in particular smallholders and family farmers;

27. *Welcomes* the growing contribution of sustainable tourism initiatives in mountain regions as a way to enhance environmental protection and socio-economic benefits to local communities and the fact that consumer demand is increasingly moving towards responsible and sustainable tourism;

28. *Notes* that public awareness needs to be raised with respect to the positive and unaccounted economic benefits that mountains provide not only to highland communities, but also to a large portion of the world's population living in lowland areas, and underlines the importance of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and economic activity and of developing innovative means of financing for their protection;

29. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and in this context encourages transboundary cooperation approaches where the States concerned agree to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

30. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, that the Convention on the Protection of the Alps[8] promotes constructive new approaches to the integrated, sustainable development of the Alps, including through its thematic protocols on spatial planning, mountain farming, conservation of nature and landscape, mountain forests, tourism, soil protection, energy and transport, as well as the Declaration on Population and Culture,[9] the Action Plan on Climate Change in the Alps,[10] cooperation with other convention bodies on relevant subjects and activities in the context of the Mountain Partnership;

31. *Also notes with appreciation* the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, adopted and signed by the seven countries of the region to provide a framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development and a forum for dialogue between all involved stakeholders;

32. *Further notes with appreciation* the work of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, which promotes transboundary cooperation among eight country members of the Himalaya Hindu Kush to foster action and change for overcoming the economic, social and physical vulnerability of mountain peoples;

33. *Notes with appreciation* the contribution of the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the statement of the Adelboden Group in promoting specific policies, appropriate institutions and processes for mountain regions and the positive, unaccounted economic benefits they provide;

34. *Stresses* the importance of building capacity, strengthening institutions and enhancing higher and continuing education on mountain issues in order to expand opportunities and encourage the retention of skilled people, including youth, in mountain areas, and stresses also the importance of promoting educational and advocacy programmes in order to foster sustainable mountain development at all levels, to enhance awareness of sustainable development issues in mountain regions and of the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas and to take full advantage of the opportunities provided annually by International Mountain Day on 11 December in this regard;

35. *Encourages* Member States to collect at the local, national and regional levels, as appropriate, disaggregated scientific data on mountain areas through systematic monitoring, including of trends in progress and change, based on relevant criteria, to support interdisciplinary research programmes and projects and to improve decision-making and planning;

36. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of the relevant chapters of Agenda 21,[1] including chapter 13, and paragraph 42 and other relevant paragraphs of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[2] taking into account the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations

[8] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1917, No. 32724.

[9] Available from www.alpconv.org/theconvention/index_eu.

[10] Available from www.alpconv.org/climate/index_eu.

Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations;

37. *Recognizes* the efforts of the Mountain Partnership implemented in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, invites the international community and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to consider participating actively in the Mountain Partnership to increase its value, and invites the Partnership secretariat to report on its activities and achievements to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twentieth session, in 2013, at which "mountains" will be one of the thematic clusters to come under revision;

38. *Notes with appreciation*, in this context, the efforts of the Mountain Partnership to cooperate with existing multilateral instruments relevant to mountains, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity,[3] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[5] the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[4] the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and mountain-related regional instruments such as the Convention on the Protection of the Alps[6] and the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;

39. *Notes* the ongoing preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012;

40. *Notes with appreciation* the ongoing efforts to improve strategic cooperation among the institutions and initiatives dealing with mountain development, such as the Mountain Forum, the Mountain Partnership, the Mountain Research Initiative, the International Mountain Society, the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development and the Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregion;

41. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution under the sub-item entitled "Sustainable mountain development" of the item entitled "Sustainable development".